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REMARKS

ON THE TRAGEDY OF TIMOLEON:

WHEREIN THE
BEAUTIES and ERRORS

Are Impartially consider'd.

*Sape Stylum veritas, iterum, quæ digna legi sint,
Scripturus; neque te ut miretur Turba, labores,
Contentus paucis Lectoribus.* HOR. Sat. X. Lib. I.



[730]

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By J. T. COOPER, Esq. of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law.
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REMARKS

ON THE

Tragedy of *Timoleon*, &c.

DEAR CRITES,



S Friendship overlooks all Difficulties to testify its Sincerity, I have comply'd with both your Requests, of seeing *Timoleon* acted, and giving you my Opinion of it: though as to the first, my just Admiration of some late Authors has left me little relish for the present Entertainments of the Theatre; and as to the second, I have too much Good-will for all who make it their endeavour to please, not

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to feel a kind of Regret in detecting those Errors, which, perhaps, thro' haste, or want of a sufficient acquaintance with the *Drama*, have rendred them widely distant from the Mark.

I must confess myself infinitely charm'd with the Prologue, not only when I heard it spoke by Mr. *Wilks*, but likewise, when, stript of those Advantages which Action gives, it had pass'd the Test of my private and most strict Examination. He begins with a fine, and too just Satire on the present Depravity of Taste, only to be pleas'd with *Pantomimes*, or something equally out of Nature, and as little conducive to the End for which the *Drama* was first instituted, and for which alone it ought to be encouraged. Thence he proceeds to the Praise of *Liberty*, and that furnishes him with the occasion of mentioning those Heroes, to whom we are indebted for so inestimable a Jewel. To this I must add, that the *Sense* is no where maim'd, or wrested for the sake of the *Expression*; nor does the *Expression* sink beneath the Dignity of the *Sense*, but both agree in that admirable Unanimity, which shews the Author, whoever he is, possess'd of the true Spirit of Poetry.

I began to flatter myself, from this excellent Prologue, that I shou'd once more see, what a very judicious Gentleman of my Acquaintance says is rather to be *wish'd* than *hoped* for in this Age, a perfect Play: nor did



did I alter my Opinion the whole first Scene. *Orthagoras*, the Chief-Priest of *Jupiter*, and *Æschylus*, a noble *Corinthian*, open it; and in a few Lines discover to the Audience the Miseries to which their Country is reduc'd by the Usurpation and Tyranny of *Timophanes*. *Dinarchus*, who enters to them, heightens the Description by a very natural and moving Narrative of the Death of *Philistus*, and Distress of *Cleone*; and by the Questions and Answers mutually interchanged between them three, we are let into the Characters and Designs of most of the chief Persons brought afterwards on the Stage. This Scene is well conducted, includes a great many fine Lines, and very few that are exceptionable.

I cou'd wish I had the same Account to give you of the succeeding ones; but alas! the pleasure of the Entertainment is over: our Author already stoops from his Height; and all those towring Expectations he had rais'd, fall with his Muse. *Timophanes* enters, and indeed maintains, in his Discourse with *Lycander*, the Character has been given him, of insolent in ill-got Power, cruel and luxurious; but when the unhappy *Cleone* makes her appearance to so little purpose, as to lie down and hear a Song, it very much lessens the Idea we had conceiv'd of her Misfortunes; and by the bye, I wou'd fain know for what reason the Author introduced that Song? If in compliance with the Humour of the Town,

he is to be forgiven ; but not the Friend who supplied him with it : Because if there must of necessity be a Song, it shou'd, methinks, have been such a one as might have inspired in the soft Bosom of the Listner, those Desires which were for the Interest of *Timophanes's* Passion, who, we must suppose, was the Person that gave the Entertainment ; the Lady being a Prisoner in his Palace alone, without so much as one favourite Woman or Confidant, who else we might have imagin'd had indulg'd her Sorrows by this poetical Repetition of the Cause of them. But let that pass, who wou'd not expect that a Virgin, bred in the strictest Principles of Virtue, and in the most perfect Love and Obedience to a Father, finding herself forc'd from his Protection, and in the power of a Man, whom she knew had the basest Design on her Honour ; who wou'd not, I say, expect she shou'd make use of this Opportunity, either to upbraid his Cruelty, or endeavour to sooth him to Remorse ? But this Objection may be answered, that her Soul was too gentle for the one, and too haughty for the other. 'Tis possible ; yet since her Business then was only to *think* or speak in such a manner, that we cannot guess *what she thinks*, in my Judgment her Presence this Scene might have been spared.

After her removal, *Timophanes* resumes his political Conversation with *Lycander*, in which the Murder of *Timoleon* is resolv'd ; but
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in what manner it is intended to be perpetrated, we are left in the dark : and this, with a thread-bare Simile of the Eagle and the Sun, ends the Act.

The first Scene of the second Act, is yet worse than the last of the first : it begins with *Eunestia*, who, in imitation of Mr. *Dryden's Palmyra*, is bidding the Hours fly swift to bring her Lover, but with much more Success ; for poor *Palmyra* languish'd a long time for her absent *Leonidas*, whereas *Eunestia* had but time to wish, and strait a Servant informs her a Stranger is arriv'd, whom she knows to be *Timoleon* before she sees him : by Instinct, we must suppose ; for he has not given the least Notice of his coming to any one Person in the Play. But as what we earnestly wish, we naturally hope ; 'tis probable, the Strength of Imagination might go a great way towards this interior Intelligence. 'Twould be well for the Author, if we cou'd as easily reconcile to Reason, how *Timoleon* came to be so ignorant of the State of *Corinth*, as not to know she was under Arbitrary Power ; that his Brother had usurped the Sovereign Sway ; Circumstances, which 'twas impossible to conceal from those least interested in them. He was at the time of his Brother's Assumption, on a Treaty with the *Argians*, commission'd by the Senate for that purpose : were his Instructions so full at setting out, or did the Enemy so immediately accede to his Proposals, as to stand

stand in need of no Couriers to pass between him and *Corinth* during that Negotiation? or cou'd none of the Patriots of their Country, who look'd on him as her only Hope, find the means of conveying to his Ears the History of her Distress? Was the Passion of *Eunestia* confin'd to her Heart and Tongue, that she forbore communicating her Mind by Letter? But we are told, the Cunning of *Timophanes* try'd all ways to intercept *Timoleon's* Knowledge of his Actions. Is then the Subversion of a State so slight a matter, that neighbouring Nations talk not of it? Are the Affairs of private Families reveal'd and censur'd, yet those of a Common-wealth known only to themselves? Incongruous! Inconsistent with common Sense, and every day's Experience! Besides, I can find no Motive which cou'd induce the Author to be guilty of an Absurdity so gross, so obvious to the meanest Capacity: little Improbabilities are sometimes excus'd, tho' they can never be allow'd, when they give room for some beautiful Incident, which cou'd no otherwise be brought about; but here it is so far from adding to the Scene, that it draws with it another Fault, that is, of laying *Eunestia* under the Necessity of repeating what we have already been told in the Beginning of the Play by *Dinarchus*, in a more agreeable and pathetick Manner.

Besides, 'tis evident, that the Author made *Timoleon* thus ignorant of the Affairs of *Corinth*,

rinth, meerly to please some Caprice of his own; it being as contrary to the Account we have in History, as it is to Reason. This we need go no farther to prove, than a little Pamphlet lately publish'd, entitled, *Some Account of the Life and Character of Timoleon*; which says, that *Timophanes* had caus'd himself to be proclaimed King before the *Argian* War.

The second Scene begins with *Æschylus*; who finding *Dinarchus* sleeping on his Couch, bursts into this Exclamation:

“How gentle is his Sleep!—such always is

“The Sleep of Innocence in Youth or Age.

He has no sooner spoke these Lines, than the Author, as if to give him the Lye, makes *Dinarchus* start from that *Gentle Sleep*, and wake in the utmost Horror and Agony of Soul: He talks wildly for a while, then gives an account of a long and terrible Dream. I was sorry to see so palpable, yet so easily rectified a Mistake escape the Pen of any Gentleman, who pretends to write; since either the lengthning *Æschylus's* Soliloquy, or shortning *Dinarchus's* Dream, wou'd have remov'd all Objection, as to the first part of this Scene. A little farther, we find another Solecism of much the same nature, and must without doubt be owing, as the former, only to Neglect; which is, that, when a Letter is brought to *Dinarchus*, *Æschylus* cries out immediately:

“O

" O Heaven assist his Years to stand this Shock!"

Now, how he came to be acquainted that it contain'd any thing which might shock him, is a Query, that the Poet has left unanswered? And this brings us also to reflect, by whom, and for what intent that Letter was sent? If from a Friend, and in order that he might avoid the threatned Storm, some Notice, methinks, ought to have been taken of it; and certainly we cannot suppose it came from *Timophanes*: Kings give no warning of the Punishments they really design to put in execution, and the Officers and Guards, who immediately enter, prove he was sufficiently in earnest. *Eunefia* also here acts a part altogether unbecoming her Character of filial Piety: When she beholds her aged Father sinking beneath the Burthen of his Grievs, looking on himself as utterly undone, yet trembling more for her Misfortunes than his own; wou'd it not have been her Duty to have apply'd a Cordial to his almost expiring Soul? Ought she not to have inform'd him of the Arrival of *Timoleon*, and the Assurance he had given her of devoting himself to the Service of his Country, and her injur'd Laws? Was there not every thing to be expected from that Promise, and the Power he had of accomplishing it? In vain the Author imagines he supports her Character by making her tell him, she'll

— " Study

— “ Study new ways to divert his Cares,

While she neglects to inform him of the only thing wou'd do it. But, perhaps you will say, *Dinarchus* was by this time acquainted that *Timoleon* was in *Corinth*: if so, the Despair they all of them at present express, is an unpardonable Injury to the Merits of that Hero, and a manifest Contradiction to the Hopes and Expectations they had conceiv'd on his Arrival.

The Scenes again are drawn, which, by the way, is the third Time they have been so this Act; and we are presented with that August Assembly, the *Senate*, who, methinks, wou'd have done well to have given us a clearer insight into their Sentiments concerning *Timophanes*, and that great Affair they were that Day met for the Decision of, before the Harangue of *Timoleon* determin'd them in favour of Liberty and a Commonwealth. The Arguments he makes use on to dissuade them from confirming *Timophanes* in the Title and Authority of *King*, are deliver'd in a Manner worthy of the Cause he pleads; but I cannot help being of Opinion, that he omits a very forcible one; which is, that, beside being subjected to the Power of one Man, they must, according to all probability, be also subservient to a Band of four hundred Foreign Soldiers, by whom *Timophanes* had acquired the name of King; by
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whom he cou'd hope chiefly to be supported in it, and therefore whom it would be almost unavoidable for him not to encourage in whatever Demands they shou'd make: but 'tis likely there might be good Reasons for this Omission; I shall therefore say no more of it, and conclude my Remarks on this Scene, which ends the Act, and is indeed the least faulty in it.

The first Scene of the third Act, shews us *Dinarchus* in Prison. There is something poetical and agreeable enough in the Soliloquy he makes, as to the Diction; but he still seems depriv'd of all Hope, which I think confirms my former Conjecture, that he neither knew of *Timoleon's* coming, nor expected him soon. A Messenger is sent from *Lycander* with Offers of his Life and Liberty, on Condition he will deliver up *Eunestia*; but whether the Passion of that Favourite of *Timophanes* tends to Marriage, or otherwise, we can only guess by the excessive Rage the Father falls into. Perhaps he knew *Lycander* was already married, and cou'd have no Designs on his Daughter that were honourable; else, however averse he might be to his Principles, and to making an Alliance with him, 'twas too much to call for Torments, Plagues, Furies, and Thunder to burst with ruin on him, merely for being in Love, and offering every thing in his power for the Attainment of the beloved Object: but as we afterward find his Aim was vile,
it

it had been some little ease to our Curiosity to perceive *Dinarchus* had cause to know it to be so; and that he said no more than any Father, who was a virtuous Man, would have said in the like provoking Circumstance. The old Man having vented his Rage on the Messenger of *Lycander*, is accosted by his Daughter *Eunestia*, who is permitted to visit him by the Good-nature of the Jaylor, and there ensues between them a short Scene, but moving enough, and faultless in the Conduct, except in one Line, where *Dinarchus* tells her, *Lycander* has threatned Force, which indeed we can no where gather from what the Messenger inform'd him: but I suppose the Author, intending the Attempt of ravishing her in the fifth Act, forgot to put any Words into his Mouth, which shou'd give either *Dinarchus*, or the Audience room to guess any such thing was meant. To prevent that Force he talks of, he goes to fetch a Dagger. On which, *Eunestia*, not altogether resigned, again wishes for *Timoleon*; who at that Instant enters: See the Sympathy of Love! After some few mutual Endearments, the old Man returns, and the remaining part of the Scene is work'd up with a great deal of Ease and Nature.

Timophanes and *Lycander* begin the second Scene with a Regret to find *Timoleon* has entered *Corinth*, and the Reception he has met from all the Brave and Virtuous;

but mention not a Syllable of their Disappointment in his intended Murder, which was so firmly resolv'd in the last Scene of the first Act. After some few Menaces, which we cannot well comprehend the Meaning of, they both withdrew; *Timophanes* uttering this Rant:

“ I wou'd have burnt the Senate, and have chose

“ That Fire to light me to my Throne.

“ The Cowards!

“ But they shall feel my Wrath—This way,

“ *Lycander.*”

'Tis plain, the Author imitated the last Writings of Mr. *Lee*, in the two first Lines of this Quotation; but in the other, I shou'd have been at a loss to know whether he had some way in his Head to make the Senate feel his Wrath, or whether he apprehended they might not have some way to plague him farther yet; if seeing the two Talkers walk off the Stage, and afterwards the Word *Exeunt* in the printed Play, had not inform'd me, *Timophanes* meant only “*this way*”, as the Walk he thought most pleasant in the Garden, and therefore chose to amuse himself in it. As he goes off the Stage, *Olinthus* and *Æschylus* come in with drawn Swords. It was no difficult thing, I perceive, to enter the most private Recesses of a King's Palace, in those days; for had there been

been any Guards or Attendants at the Avenues, they cou'd never have pass'd unquestion'd; especially thus arm'd for Vengeance. *Timoleon's* timely Appearance alone preserves his Brother, and suspends the Fury, which had decreed his Death. The following Scene between him and *Timophanes*, seems to have something of that Energy, with which the Play begun; but *Liberty* is so copious and glorious a Theme, that it cannot fail inspiring all who treat on it with sublime Sentiments.

Madam *Cleone*, whom we have lost sight of since the first Act, begins the fourth. By the Disorder of her Dress, we have room to imagine some foul Play has been offer'd her, though the Poet's Modesty wou'd not suffer her to make any mention whether her Violation had been accomplished, or only attempted by the Tyrant. To her *Olinthus* enters in disguise; I suppose to give *Timophanes* an Opportunity of taking away his Life, and destroying all the Remains of the miserable *Philistus*: for he has no other Business in this Scene, nor indeed in the whole Play; his Character being no way conducive to carrying on the Plot. His Design appears to be the killing of the King; why then does he not do it, or at least attempt it? they were but Man to Man, and, methinks, it would better have become the Violence of his Rage to have run upon him at once, than to have
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provok'd him by Upbraidings to call in Attendants to his assistance, and turn on himself the Mischief he design'd for the other; enjoying only the Woman's Comfort, railing. In fine, all the Business I can find in this Scene, is to let us darkly into the Knowledge that *Timophanes* has triumph'd over the Honour of *Cleone*. Let us go on then to the next, which is begun by the imprison'd *Dinarchus*, with a Soliloquy. As there is no great matter in the first four Lines, I shall pass them over in silence; but I cannot do so by the others. Questioning with himself what dying is, he says,

"Is it to quit our Thought?—Oh! if

"it is,

"Tis Bliss sufficient, when each Thought's

"a Pain.

"Why then shou'd Mortals startle thus at
"Death?

"Gloomy indeed at the first View it looks,

"But, enter'd once, it opens to new Scenes

"Of Joys untasted, unimagined Pleasures."

Having transcribed the Author's own Words, it will be needless I should trouble you with any of mine, to prove the manifest Contradiction in the Sense of them: for if Death destroys *Thought*, I cannot see how we shall be capable of tasting its Joys, its unimagined Pleasures; *Thought* being allow'd by every one to be the Seat of Happiness, or Misery;

and

and in ceasing to *think*, we must likewise cease to *feel* either of them. The Scene, after the Entrance of *Eunestia*, is a plain Imitation of *Shakespear's* King *Lear*; and indeed through most of *Dinarchus's* Part, he seems to have an eye to that Character: but of that anon. The Conduct is in this place, however, less blameable than in most of the others, and continues so till the Scene changing to the Palace of *Timoleon*, *Timophanes* comes in the dead of Night with an intent of murdering him with his own hands, which had been infinitely more conformable to the Policy of his Character to have had perform'd by those of others. What was become of those Persons, whoever they were, that were to have assassinated him before he came to *Corinth*? or wherefore was not *Pheron* employ'd for this purpose now, as well as he was in the last Act? It has also little of probability, methinks, that *Timophanes* shou'd put so great a Stake to hazard, as attempting on his Brother's Life and failing in it, by coming singly to his own House, where he must expect Servants wou'd rush in to his Defence on the least Noise shou'd be made: He might have detain'd *Pheron* at least, as a Second, who, we find, attended him to the Door. But I shou'd be glad to know why this Incident was introduced at all? *Timophanes* was indeed fond of arbitrary Power, and had all the Principles

ples of Tyranny in his Nature; but I can find no part of History which mentions any Enterprize of this kind against his Brother's Life. If to shew the natural Affection, Temperance, and Courage of one Brother, the Author has taken this poetical Licence of making the other appear worse than he really was, he certainly shou'd have found for him a more artful way of going about his Design, or not have given him, so frequently as he does, the Epithet of *Cunning*: But I suppose he is of Mr. *Bays's* mind, who sinks one Character to heighten the other. But to proceed; he thinks himself secure of accomplishing his Purpose: He is sure no body sees or hears him; where then were the Attendants on *Timoleon*?—gone to Bed?—No, certainly; some body must be up and awake: how got he Admission else? and whoever that Person was, methinks he was strangely remiss in his Duty not to acquaint his Lord what Visiter he must prepare to receive. Had *Timophanes* been a common Man, the Porter indeed, like some of those belonging to our modern Noblemen, might have thought it not worth his while to go of that Errand; but as it was no less than a King, at least one who had that Title, to whom the Gates were open'd, he ought to have had more manners than to suffer him to wait so long, especially at that Time of Night, exposed to

Ghosts

Ghosts and Goblins. Well, to rouse *Timophanes* to a Sense of his Crimes, or rather to please the Galleries, (for I see no other great Effect it has,) the Ghost of his Father rises, and speaks in a manner agreeable enough to the Idea we conceive of such Monitors: But why *Timoleon*, who enters the moment the Spirit has given over his Remonstrance, shou'd come in with his Sword drawn, or ask what Noise that was, I cannot readily comprehend? 'Tis evident he knew not his Brother was there, by the Surprize he is in at sight of him; and as for hearing a Noise, there was none but what the Ghost made in speaking, and we cannot suppose the Sound of his Voice reach'd any other *Ears* than those of *Timophanes*, any more than his Presence was visible to any other *Eyes*. He must, therefore, have had some innate Warning that there was Danger near him, which if he had communicated to the Audience, it might have help'd to strengthen the Assertion, that virtuous Men are never without the immediate Attendance of a good Angel, who by some secret Method, (unknown to those who are not so fortunate) give them notice when any thing is attempted to their Prejudice. Be it so, I shall pretend to dive no farther into this abstruse Point, being in haste to come to the Observation of three Lines, which in my Judgment

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ment are very beautiful. They are spoke by *Timoleon*:

“ Thou look’st a very Statue of Surprize,

“ As if a Lightning Blast had dry’d thee

“ up,

“ And had not left thee Moisture for a

“ Tear.”

Were there a few more such Sentiments as these, so new, and so well express’d, they might have detain’d our Attention from regarding the Absurdities with which this Act is crouded; but this young Son of *Phæbus* discovers but now and then a hasty Gleam of his Father’s Brightness, just to let us see he is not altogether an Alien to the Family, and then grows dull again like the mere Kindred of the Earth.

We begin now to feel some Impatience for the Catastrophe, no less than the de-throning *Timophanes*; the Rescue of *Eunestia*, who has been carried away by *Lycander*; the Fates of *Cleone*, *Olinthus*, and *Dinar-chus*, are all depending on this last Act; and as yet no Preparations are made toward bringing any one of these Affairs about. *Timoleon*, urg’d by *Orthagoras*, and *Æschylus*, seems now determined to answer the Hope they had conceiv’d in him: To heighthen his Indignation against his Brother, they inform him that *Eunestia* is carried to the Palace of *Timophanes*: on which he resolves
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to go thither, and in the mean time, orders *Æschylus* to summon the yet remaining Lovers of their Country, and *Orthagoras* to prepare a Sacrifice; and this is the Business of the first Scene.

Timophanes begins the Second: He tells us the Boy who durst to brave him, has met his Fate; but who that Boy is, we are entirely ignorant, till a great while after a Servant informs *Timoleon*, that *Olinthus* is dead, by order of the King; by which we have room to suppose he is the Person meant in this Soliloquy. *Timoleon* now enters in pursuance of his Resolution to deliver *Eunestia*; but he has still a good Opinion of his Brother, notwithstanding his late Attempt on his Life, to trust himself alone with him in a place where he was so much Master, as his own Palace. It seems also as if he were flatter'd with a belief that he shou'd be able to persuade him to resign that Lady; for he cou'd not be vain enough to imagine his single Strength cou'd force her from such a Number of Guards, Courtiers, and Attendants, as we must suppose were ever near the Person of *Timophanes*, not to mention what a Lover, inflam'd as *Lycander* was, might not be expected to do, to secure the Possession of his Mistress. *Timophanes* here discovers a little more Policy than he did in the last Act; for he now resolves to make use of this Opportunity his Brother has so kindly given him

of destroying him; and also to have it done by some of his Creatures, on whom he might afterwards cast the Odium of the Deed, and clear himself of it to the People. This takes him off the Stage in a more natural manner than the *Exits* in this Play are generally contriv'd: the Shrieks of a Woman, suppos'd to be *Eunestia*, are likewise a just Call for *Timoleon*, as does the sight of a dead Body in the next Room, which he takes to be that Lady, give him a fine Occasion of proving himself the *Hero*, as well as the Lover: for tho' the Tenderneſs of his Paſſion ſeems to exact all his Attention to be collected on that ſad Object, on hearing a ſecond Cry, he ſuſpends his Sorrows to fly to the Relief of whoever he ſhall find in Diſtreſs.

The third Scene diſcovers *Lycander* and *Eunestia*. And now the Poet ſeems to have altogether forgot that nice Modeſty, which in the fourth Act wou'd not ſuffer *Cleone* to make the leaſt mention of the Violence ſhe had ſuſtain'd; we have here ſo long, and indeed ſo fulſome a Prelude to the intended Rape, as fatigues, and makes ſick the Senſe of Hearing; and however agreeable the ſight of *Timoleon* may have been throughout the Play, he is never ſo welcome as now when at laſt he enters, and puts an end to it by the Death of *Lycander*. By a Servant of *Timophanes*, who ſoon after comes in to *Timoleon*, our Curioſity is gratify'd with an
Ac-

Account of the Catastrophe of *Olinthus's* and *Cleone's* Fates, and we are no longer in pain to know whose that dead Body was, which had put *Timoleon* into so terrible a Consternation: by the prudent Advice of this Person, he bears *Eunestia* to a place of more Security, little indeed being to be hoped for either of them, while they continued there.

The Conduct of this part of the Act, as well as in the Third, where *Olinthus* and *Æschylus* enter breathing Revenge, and in full pursuit of *Timophanes*, who cannot be gone ten Paces from them, puts me in mind of Children playing at *Hoop! us Hide*, where they often see, and won't see, to prolong the Diversion: for *Timophanes*, with his Attendants, appear the very Moment *Timoleon* and *Eunestia* go off; yet, tho' it was of the utmost Consequence to the Interest of the Tyrant, that he shou'd secure this Lion in the Toil he had unwarily brought himself into, such is his Stupidity, that he neither sees him, nor has taken any care to prevent his Departure; than which nothing cou'd have been more easy.

Well, the Prey being escaped, *Timophanes* may rave at leisure on the Disappointment; which he does, till *Pheron* revives the Hope of Revenge, by promising to assassinate *Timoleon* at the Altar, where he is that Morning to offer Sacrifice to *Jupiter Eleutheri-
us*. The

The last drawing of the Scenes, present us with a Temple, *Orthagoras* and other Priests celebrating Divine Rites, which, by the Assistance of the Musick, appears Solemn enough: *Pheron* entering on his execrable Design, kneels down near *Timoleon*, where, being undisguis'd, and known, not only for a Creature of *Timophanes*, but for one of those most ready to undertake any wicked Enterprize; 'tis strange he was not taken notice of, and not suffer'd to mingle in their Devotions, had no other Reason oppos'd it, than their Knowledge of his Crimes: whereas there was sufficient to make them imagine he came not thither to *pray*; yet is he left at liberty to prosecute his Design, which is prevented only by *Dinarchus*, who running in at that critical Moment, arrests the uplifted Dagger, and strikes the Assassin dead.

What a pity it is that this Hero can never be preserv'd, without Improbabilities, such as wou'd make one think him rather a fictitious than a real Character; but though, as I have before observ'd, all the Designs introduc'd by the Poet against his Life, are entirely fabulous, and have not the least Foundation from History; yet had they been so conducted as to have seem'd real, poetical Licence might have excus'd the Variation.

Can any thing more discompose our Attention, than that Jumble of Incidents which conspire

spire for the Detection and Death of *Pheron*? In the first place, *Dinarchus* is permitted by his Jaylor to quit the Prison; a thing which few Men, however compassionate, especially of his Station, and under the Reign of a Tyrant, wou'd venture to grant to a State-Prisoner: in the next, what Motive induces him to make this Request? Why, to see his Daughter. How does he hope to see her? He cannot suppose that *Lycander*, who has taken her away, suffers her to walk about at liberty; because then 'tis likely she wou'd not remain long in his power: He therefore only by leaving the Prison runs the hazard of being hereafter more closely confin'd, and exposing the good-natured Jaylor to the Rage of *Timophanes*. Then, passing by the Temple, he sees *Pheron* go in. Well, what cou'd he infer from that? Was the Purpose of that Wretch wrote in his Forehead, that to prevent it, the tender Father shou'd forget the Calls of Nature, urging him to visit his Daughter? But the Confusion I was in for the Author at these Mistakes, was infinitely enhanc'd, when soon after I beheld *Timophanes* once more enter *solus*. 'Tis true, he appears confident of *Timoleon's* Death; but why he shou'd be so, I know not: had he so much reason to depend on the Sword of *Pheron*, as to be certain he might not fall beneath that hand, which had disarmed himself? But were there even a possibility,
which

which there is not, of answering this Objection, in the present Hurry and Discontent of the People, he^d could not think himself entirely safe, tho' *Timoleon* had been dead; and it is therefore unnatural to believe he would have run the hazard of passing without some Guard either of Friends or Soldiers. I have nothing more to say of this Scene, which concludes the Play with the Death of *Timophanes*, which, as soon as he appeared in the manner I have related, might easily be foreseen.

Thus, Sir, have I gone through the whole Play, Scene by Scene, to the end you may more readily perceive whether my Observations are just, or the contrary. As I pretend not to Infallibility, I may, perhaps, have sometimes err'd through *Mistake*, but am certain I have not done so through *Prejudice*; not only because I am entirely a Stranger both to the Person and Character of the Author, but likewise, because, if I know myself, it is much more agreeable to my Nature to *admire* than *discommend*.

I do assure you, with that Sincerity which is required of me, that the Prologue, and Opening of the Play, had so prepossessed me in favour of the Author, that I could not believe, at seeing it acted, the Faults of the ensuing Scenes were owing to *him*, but to the arbitrary Proceedings of the *Managers* of that

House;

the Scenes seldom drawn; yet is there nothing wanting in either of them to affect the Mind, according to their different Intents. Had the Author of *Timoleon* retrench'd the number of his Characters to half as many, and have done the same by his Incidents, those which remain'd, wou'd have appear'd more agreeable, and that Hurry been avoided, which distracts the Attention, and renders it incapable to dwell long enough on any one thing to be affected with it. All who have ever pretended to any Regulation of the Drama, have laid it down as a Maxim ever to be maintain'd, That no great Character shou'd be brought on the Stage, which does not some way or other contribute towards the main Design; and if there be an Under-Plot (which yet 'tis better to avoid) it must still be depending on, and assisting to the other. How little this has been observed by the Author of *Timoleon*, is too evidently proved: So much therefore for the Conduct; let us now proceed to a little Examination of the Diction.

There is in most of it a great deal of Ease and Nature, but then it flows thro' a Lameness of Expression, if I may be allow'd to call it so, which by becoming tedious to the Ear, reaches not the Heart, nor touches the Passions in us. This will appear wherever the Author may be properly said to be the Author; that is, where he follows the Dictates

tates of his own Genius ; but where he has copied from others, it must be different, according to the different Manners of those he borrows from. To *Shakespear*, his *Dinar-chus* is indebted for the moving Part of his Distress : To *Rowe*, *Timoleon* owes his Temperance and Fortitude ; as to *Addison* his Patriotism. *Timophanes* indeed would, but cannot rob *Bajazet* of his Fierceneſs, though he makes bold with a little of his Haughtineſs and Cruelty. As for *Olinthus* and *Cleone* they are doubtleſs the Children of his own Muſe, and the Language they ſpeak is taught them only by their Mother ; but *Euneſia* ſeems a more travell'd Lady, and has her Converſation larded with a vaſt Variety of the moſt agreeable Phraſes are to be found among the *Grecian*, *Roman*, or *Turkiſh* Heroines. This you may think Raillery ; but if, to ſave yourſelf the trouble of examining ſo many Volumes, you pleaſe only to look into my Friend *Byshe's* Collection of ſublime and natural Sentiments, you will preſently perceive the truth of what I ſay.

I doubt not but you'll expect I ſhou'd take the ſame freedom with the Epilogue, I have done with the Prologue and Play ; but I muſt beg to be excus'd, I am but a poor judge of Epilogues, according to the preſent Mode of writing 'em, and as our Author in this but follows the Faſhion, he is not to be condemn'd. All I ſhall pretend to tell you con-

cerning it, is, that I imagine it occasion'd
 some Dispute between Mrs. *Oldfield*, and the
 Poet: she, I presume, not approving it as at
 first wrote, oblig'd him to make some altera-
 tions: on which, he has Printed both; the
 first, entitl'd, *An Epilogue as it was written
 by the Author*; the other, *The Epilogue as it
 was spoken by Mrs. Oldfield*; tho' indeed the
 Difference between them is so very little mate-
 rial, that I think Printing both only serv'd to
 deprive the *Bookseller* of another Page for
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and humble

PHILOMUSAS.

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